



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

CITIZEN WORKGROUP

Upper Missouri River Reservoir Fisheries Management Plan (UMRRFMP)

Finalizing the Draft Update

December 14, 2009

MACo Conference Room (Meeting 8)

Final Workgroup session

SESSION SUMMARY

Process Objectives

1. In 6-8 meetings, explore aspects of a fisheries Management Plan for Holter, Hauser, and Canyon Ferry Reservoirs.
2. Within the Workgroup's charter, develop consensus alternatives and recommend those alternatives to FWP.

Session Objectives

1. Discuss, provide feedback and come to general understanding on the draft Updated Plan.
2. Review the process from here to completion.

Workgroup Members Present

Virgil Binkley	Bart Bratlien	Doug Breker
Alex Ferguson	Dale Gilbert	George Liknes
Tim AcAlpine	Dan Nottingham	Pete Cardinal
Darren Raney	Keith Schultz	Charles Bocock
Dan Spence	Pat Volkmar	Luckie Bethel
Virginia Tribe (Facilitator)		

FWP Technical Support

Karen Zackheim	Eric Roberts
Beth Giddings	Don Skaar

Completed Agenda Items

What's happened since we last met in terms of the process?

- The public comment period was completed in October. A summary of the comments as well as FWP response to those comments was distributed to the Workgroup.
- The next public comment opportunity will be when the Commission addresses needed regulation changes necessary to implement the Final Plan.

Reviewing the Final Draft Updated Management Plan

FWP Preferred Alternatives

Based on comments received from the public as well as the Workgroup's recommended alternatives, FWP developed a set of preferred alternatives. Those alternatives were presented and explained to the Workgroup. Their general and specific comments follow.

Workgroup General Comments

- As part of the Plan presentation and discussion:
 - Include the Workgroup's charter and general process;
 - Explain that the Workgroup's recommended alternatives were not necessarily chosen by FWP;
 - List the Workgroup's recommended alternatives and explain where the Department's final alternatives differ from those recommended by the Workgroup (could be an appendix).
- Regardless of the Final Plan, the adaptive management intent and philosophy needs to be honored and implemented in a timely way. That philosophy provides the basis of the agreements made among Workgroup members.
- "Triggers" should be strengthened/more absolute throughout the Plan.
- Continue the Workgroup process where useful.

Specific Feedback Regarding FWP Preferred Alternatives

Canyon Ferry Walleye

- Strengthen the triggers.
- Reconsider Alternative 2. The Workgroup believes that the public comments strongly support it.
- Leave the current fish possession limit for walleye on the reservoir system in place.

Hauser Walleye

- Consider adding mechanisms that protect larger fish. Although not agreed on, the following ideas were offered:
 - Seasonal closures
 - Catch and release of sports fish only
 - Close boat access during parts of the season
- Take a strong look at the causeway.
- Holter walleye should be managed the same as Hauser so there is consistent law enforcement.
- Strengthen triggers.

Hauser Yellow Perch

- Keep at the 50 fish limit.
- Consider biology/forage habitat.
- Consider catch and release after so many fish (25?).
- Consider the social reasons to maintain the current limit.

Holter Yellow Perch (Same as for Hauser)

- Keep at the 50 fish limit.
- Consider biology/forage habitat.
- Consider catch and release after so many fish (25?).
- Consider the social reasons to maintain the current limit.

Hauser Kokanee

- No specific comments

Holter Kokanee

- This needs ongoing research.
- Explore/test the impact of kokanee on brown trout during brown trout spawning.
- Take another look at Alternative 3 based on potential impacts to brown trout.

Missouri River (Toston-CFR) Brown Trout; Canyon Ferry Brown Trout

- Leave what's in place.
- Consider the affect on the youth angler.
- Identify if there is a problem – Will it make a difference in Canyon Ferry or is there pressure?

Canyon Ferry Forage Fish

- Produce an annual report that includes an appendix discussing new information about increasing and possibly adding forage species.
- There continues to be disagreement among Workgroup members as to the risk involving introduction of new forage species.

Hauser Tailrace Motorized Access

- Consider non-motorized boats.
- Explore possibilities related to decreasing the number of guides on this waterway and their actions and habits (i.e., dragging anchors, etc.).
- There is a need to limit harvest in spawning beds.
- Establish regulations that work to get rid of northern pike in the waterway – including spearing of northern pike.

What Happens Next?

Decision-making Regarding the Plan

- The decision on the Final Plan will be made by the Director.
- The Commission will be informed/educated about the Plan. Their decision authority involves regulation changes, etc., that will be needed to implement the Plan.

FWP Process and Calendar

- The Department will meet internally and consider final suggestions made by the Workgroup.

- Upon completion of the Plan, Fisheries will seek the Director's signature with the intent of having the signed Plan presented at a March Commission work session. That discussion will include identifying and explaining those items that will require Commission action (e.g., regulation changes).
- Based on the Final Plan, the Department will move ahead with needed regulation changes in the annual cycle process. That means that tentatives will be publicized in July 2010 with the intent of finalizing them through the Commission's process in October 2010.